

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

In re:

THE FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND
MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR PUERTO RICO,

as representative of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, *et al.*,

Debtors.¹

PROMESA

Title III

No. 17 BK 3283-LTS

(Jointly Administered)

This filing relates to the
Commonwealth.

**NOTICE OF HEARING FOR OBJECTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO
RICO TO PROOF OF CLAIM OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC
(CLAIM NO. 4349)**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that, on August 25, 2021, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”), by and through the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (the “Oversight Board”), as the Commonwealth’s representative pursuant to section 315(b) of the *Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act* (“PROMESA”),² filed the *Objection of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to Proof of Claim of National Geographic Partners, LLC (Claim No. 4349)* (the “Objection”) with the United States District Court for the

¹ The Debtors in these Title III Cases, along with each Debtor’s respective Title III case number and the last four (4) digits of each Debtor’s federal tax identification number, as applicable, are the (i) Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3283-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3481); (ii) Puerto Rico Sales Tax Financing Corporation (“COFINA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3284-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 8474); (iii) Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation Authority (“HTA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3567-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3808); (iv) Employees Retirement System of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (“ERS”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3566-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 9686); (v) Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (“PREPA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 4780-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3747); and (vi) Puerto Rico Public Buildings Authority (“PBA”, and together with the Commonwealth, COFINA, HTA, ERS, and PREPA, the “Debtors”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 19-BK-5523-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3801) (Title III case numbers are listed as Bankruptcy Case numbers due to software limitations).

² PROMESA is codified at 48 U.S.C. §§ 2101-2241.

District of Puerto Rico (the “Court”), seeking to disallow in its entirety Proof of Claim No. 4349 filed by National Geographic Partners, LLC.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that any response to the Objection must be filed in writing with the Court and must be served upon and received by the undersigned counsel for the Commonwealth by **4:00 pm (Atlantic Time) on September 21, 2021.**

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that, in the event that one or more responses to the Objection are timely filed, the Objection shall be considered by The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, at a hearing to be held at the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico, 150 Carlos Chardón Street, Federal Building, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00918-1767, at **9:30 a.m.** on **October 6, 2021.**

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE THAT, IF NO RESPONSES TO THE OBJECTION ARE TIMELY FILED, SERVED, AND RECEIVED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS NOTICE, THE COURT MAY GRANT THE RELIEF REQUESTED IN THE OBJECTION WITHOUT FURTHER NOTICE OR HEARING.

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PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that copies of all documents filed in these Title III Cases are available (a) free of charge by visiting <https://cases.primeclerk.com/puertorico> or by calling +1 (844) 822-9231, and (b) on the Court's website at <http://www.prd.uscourts.gov>, subject to the procedures and fees set forth therein.

Dated: August 25, 2021
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Hermann D. Bauer

Hermann D. Bauer

USDC No. 215205

Carla García Benítez

USDC No. 203708

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*Attorneys for the Financial Oversight and
Management Board as representative of the
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico*

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

In re:

THE FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND
MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR PUERTO RICO,

as representative of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, *et al.*,

Debtors.¹

PROMESA

Title III

No. 17 BK 3283-LTS

(Jointly Administered)

This filings relates to the
Commonwealth.

**OBJECTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO TO PROOF OF
CLAIM OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC (CLAIM NO. 4349)**

To the Honorable United States District Court Judge Laura Taylor Swain:

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”), by and through the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (the “Oversight Board”), as the Commonwealth’s representative pursuant to section 315(b) of the *Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act* (“PROMESA”),² files this objection (the “Objection”) to Proof of Claim No. 4349 (the “Claim”) filed by National Geographic Partners, LLC (the

¹ The Debtors in these Title III Cases, along with each Debtor’s respective Title III case number and the last four (4) digits of each Debtor’s federal tax identification number, as applicable, are the (i) Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3283-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3481); (ii) Puerto Rico Sales Tax Financing Corporation (“COFINA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3284-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 8474); (iii) Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation Authority (“HTA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3567-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3808); (iv) Employees Retirement System of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (“ERS”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3566-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 9686); (v) Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (“PREPA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 4780-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3747); and (vi) Puerto Rico Public Buildings Authority (“PBA”, and together with the Commonwealth, COFINA, HTA, ERS, and PREPA, the “Debtors”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 19-BK-5523-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3801) (Title III case numbers are listed as Bankruptcy Case numbers due to software limitations).

² PROMESA is codified at 48 U.S.C. §§ 2101-2241.

“Claimant”) because the Commonwealth is not liable for the liabilities asserted. In support of the Objection, the Commonwealth respectfully represents as follows:

JURISDICTION

1. The United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico has subject matter jurisdiction to consider this matter pursuant to PROMESA section 306(a).

2. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to PROMESA section 307(a).

BACKGROUND

A. The Bar Date Orders

3. On May 3, 2017, the Oversight Board, at the request of the Governor, issued a restructuring certification pursuant to PROMESA sections 104(j) and 206 and filed a voluntary petition for relief for the Commonwealth pursuant to PROMESA section 304(a), commencing a case under Title III thereof (the “Commonwealth Title III Case”).

4. On January 16, 2018, the Debtors filed their *Motion for Order (A) Establishing Deadlines and Procedures for Filing Proofs of Claim and (B) Approving Form and Manner of Notice Thereof* [ECF No. 2255]³ (the “Bar Date Motion”). By the *Order (A) Establishing Deadlines and Procedures for Filing Proofs of Claims and (B) Approving Form and Manner of Notice Thereof* [ECF No. 2521] (the “Initial Bar Date Order”), the Court granted the relief requested in the Bar Date Motion and established deadlines and procedures for filing proofs of claim in the Title III Cases. Upon the informative motion of certain creditors, and the support of the Debtors, the Court subsequently entered the *Order (A) Extending Deadlines for Filing Proofs of Claim and (B) Approving Form and Manner of Notice Thereof* [ECF No. 3160] (together with

³ All ECF citations refer to documents filed in Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3283-LTS.

the Initial Bar Date Order the “Bar Date Orders”) extending these deadlines to June 29, 2018 at 4:00 pm (Atlantic Time).

B. Proofs of Claim and Claim Objections

5. To date, approximately 180,483 proofs of claim have been filed against the Debtors and logged by Prime Clerk, LLC. Such proofs of claim total approximately \$43.6 trillion in asserted claims against the Debtors, in addition to unliquidated amounts asserted.

6. Of the proofs of claim filed, approximately 117,009 have been filed in relation to, or reclassified to be asserted against, the Commonwealth. In accordance with the terms of the Bar Date Orders, many of these claims need not have been filed at all, or suffer from some other flaw, such as being subsequently amended, not putting forth a claim for which the Debtors are liable, being duplicative of other proofs of claim, or failing to provide information necessary for the Debtors to determine whether the claim is valid.

7. On or about March 23, 2018, Claimant filed the Claim against the Commonwealth, and it was logged by Prime Clerk, LLC as Proof of Claim No. 4349. Therein, Claimant asserted allegedly unpaid invoices relating to “advertising spots on programming network” in the aggregate amount of \$11,049.08.

OBJECTION TO PROOF OF CLAIM

8. Claims that are “unenforceable against the debtor and property of the debtor, under any agreement or applicable law” should be disallowed. 11 U.S.C. § 502(b)(1). While a properly executed and filed proof of claim constitutes *prima facie* evidence of the validity of the claim, *see* Fed. R. Bankr. P. 3001(f), made applicable to this case by PROMESA section 310, the objecting party may overcome this *prima facie* evidence with evidence which, if believed, would refute at least one of the allegations essential to the claim. *In re Reilly*, 245 B.R. 768, 773 (B.A.P. 2d Cir.), *aff’d*, 242 F.3d 367 (2d Cir. 2000); *see also Factors Funding Co. v. Fili (In re Fili)*, 257 B.R. 370,

372 (1st Cir. B.A.P. 2001) (“[A] claim is presumed valid until an objecting party has introduced evidence sufficient to rebut the claimant’s prima facie case.” (citation omitted)).

9. In accordance with these legal principles, this Objection seeks to disallow the Claim because it provides no basis for liabilities against the Commonwealth or any other Title III debtor. The Claim asserts liabilities associated with advertising spots on its network that were allegedly purchased, but never paid for, by the Commonwealth. As supporting documentation, the Claim attaches two invoices, each of which identifies the “Advertiser” as the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. The invoices also list the “Agency Billing Address” as “US Media Consulting LLC, 1221 Brickell Ave., Ste. #600, Miami, FL 33131.” Neither the Puerto Rico Tourism Company nor US Media Consulting LLC are Title III debtors. Rather, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company is a separate entity, legally distinct from the Commonwealth and each of the other Title III debtors, while US Media Consulting LLC is a private company. Further, the Claim fails to comply with the applicable rules because neither the Claim nor the supporting documentation provides any basis for asserting a claim against either the Commonwealth or any other Title III debtor in respect of liabilities purportedly owed by either the Puerto Rico Tourism Company or US Media Consulting LLC. Accordingly, because of this failure to comply with the applicable rules, neither the Debtors nor the Court are able to determine the validity of the claim.

10. In support of the foregoing, the Commonwealth relies on the *Declaration of Jay Herriman in Support of the Objection of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to Proof of Claim of National Geographic Partners, LLC (Claim No. 4349)*, dated August 25, 2021, attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

11. This Objection is limited to the grounds stated herein. Accordingly, it is without prejudice to the rights of the Commonwealth to object to the Claim or any other claim on any ground whatsoever. The Commonwealth expressly reserves all further substantive or procedural objections. Nothing contained herein or any actions taken pursuant to such relief is intended or should be construed as: (a) an admission as to the validity of any claim against the Commonwealth; (b) a waiver of the Commonwealth's right to dispute any claim on any grounds; (c) a promise or requirement to pay any claim; (d) a request or authorization to assume any prepetition agreement, contract, or lease pursuant to section 365 of the Bankruptcy Code; or (e) a waiver of the Commonwealth's rights under PROMESA, the Bankruptcy Code or any other applicable law.

NOTICE

12. The Commonwealth is providing notice of this Objection to (a) the individual creditor subject to the Objection, (b) the U.S. Trustee, and (c) the Master Service List (as defined by the *Fifteenth Amended Case Management Procedures* [ECF No. 17127-1]), which is available on the Debtors' case website at <https://cases.primeclerk.com/puertorico>. The Commonwealth submits that, in light of the nature of the relief requested, no other or further notice need be given.

NO PRIOR REQUEST

13. No prior request for the relief sought in this Objection has been made to this or any other court.

WHEREFORE, the Commonwealth respectfully requests entry of an order, substantially in the form of the Proposed Order attached hereto as **Exhibit B**, (1) granting the relief requested herein, and (2) granting the Commonwealth such other and further relief as is just.

Dated: August 25, 2021
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Hermann D. Bauer

Hermann D. Bauer

USDC No. 215205

Carla García Benítez

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Management Board as representative of the
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico*

EXHIBIT A

Declaration of Jay Herriman

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

In re:

THE FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND
MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR PUERTO RICO,

as representative of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, *et al.*,

Debtors.¹

PROMESA

Title III

No. 17 BK 3283-LTS

(Jointly Administered)

This filing relates to the
Commonwealth.

**DECLARATION OF JAY HERRIMAN IN SUPPORT OF THE OBJECTION OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO TO PROOF OF CLAIM OF NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC (CLAIM NO. 4349)**

I, Jay Herriman, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief:

1. I am a Managing Director of Alvarez & Marsal North America, LLC (“A&M”). The Financial Oversight and Management Board (the “Oversight Board”) retained A&M to assist with, *inter alia*, the claims reconciliation process for the Debtors’ cases filed pursuant to the *Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act* (“PROMESA”).² Unless otherwise stated in this declaration, I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein.

¹ The Debtors in these Title III Cases, along with each Debtor’s respective Title III case number and the last four (4) digits of each Debtor’s federal tax identification number, as applicable, are the (i) Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the “Commonwealth”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3283-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3481); (ii) Puerto Rico Sales Tax Financing Corporation (“COFINA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3284-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 8474); (iii) Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation Authority (“HTA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3567-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3808); (iv) Employees Retirement System of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (“ERS”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3566-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 9686); (v) Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (“PREPA”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 4780-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3747); and (vi) Puerto Rico Public Buildings Authority (“PBA”, and together with the Commonwealth, COFINA, HTA, ERS, and PREPA, the “Debtors”) (Bankruptcy Case No. 19-BK-5523-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3801) (Title III case numbers are listed as Bankruptcy Case numbers due to software limitations).

² PROMESA is codified at 48 U.S.C. §§ 2101-2241.

2. In my capacity as Managing Director of A&M, I am one of the persons responsible for overseeing the claims reconciliation and objection process in the Debtors' cases filed pursuant to PROMESA. The Debtors' ongoing claims reconciliation process involves the collective effort of a team of A&M employees, as well as O'Neill & Borges LLC, counsel for the Oversight Board, the legal representative of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the "Commonwealth").

3. I submit this declaration in support of the *Objection of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to Proof of Claim of National Geographic Partners, LLC (Claim No. 4349)* (the "Objection").³ I personally reviewed the Objection and am, accordingly, familiar with the information contained therein.

4. In preparation for filing the Objection, and under my direction and/or supervision, the proof of claim filed by National Geographic Partners, LLC (the "Claimant"), which was logged by Prime Clerk, LLC, as Proof of Claim No. 4349 (the "Claim"), was carefully reviewed and analyzed in good faith using due diligence by the appropriate personnel.

5. To the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the Claim does not provide any basis for liabilities against the Commonwealth. Specifically, the Claim purports to assert liabilities associated with allegedly unpaid invoices for advertising spots that were purchased, but never paid for. These invoices identify the "Advertiser" as "Puerto Rico Tourism." They also list the "Agency Billing Address" as "US Media Consulting LLC, 1221 Brickell Ave., Ste. #600, Miami, FL 33131." Neither the Puerto Rico Tourism Company nor US Media Consulting LLC are Title III debtors. Rather, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company is a separate entity, legally distinct from the Commonwealth and each of the other Title III debtors, while US Media Consulting LLC is a private company. Further, the Claim fails to comply with the applicable rules because neither

³ Capitalized terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings given to such terms in the Objection.

the Claim nor the supporting documentation provides any basis for asserting a claim against either the Commonwealth or any other Title III debtor in respect of liabilities purportedly owed by either the Puerto Rico Tourism Company or US Media Consulting LLC. Accordingly, because of this failure to comply with the applicable rules, neither the Debtors nor the Court are able to determine the validity of the claim.

6. Based on the foregoing, and to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, the information contained in the Objection and exhibits thereto is true and correct, and the relief requested therein is in the best interests of the Commonwealth and its creditors.

7. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: August 25, 2021

By: /s/ Jay Herriman
Jay Herriman

EXHIBIT B

Proposed Order

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

In re:

THE FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT AND
MANAGEMENT BOARD FOR PUERTO RICO,

as representative of

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO, *et al.*,

Debtors.¹

PROMESA

Title III

No. 17 BK 3283-LTS

(Jointly Administered)

This filing relates to the
Commonwealth.

ORDER GRANTING THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO'S OBJECTION
TO PROOF OF CLAIM OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC (CLAIM
NO. 4349)

Upon the *Objection of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to Proof of Claim of National Geographic Partners, LLC (Claim No. 4349)* (the "Objection"),² dated August 25, 2021, filed by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the "Commonwealth"), for entry of an order disallowing in its entirety Proof of Claim No. 4349 (the "Claim"), filed against the Commonwealth by National Geographic Partners, LLC, as more fully set forth in the Objection, and supporting exhibit thereto; and the Court having jurisdiction to consider the Objection and to grant the relief requested therein pursuant to section 306(a) of PROMESA; and venue being proper pursuant to section 307(a) of

¹ The Debtors in these Title III Cases, along with each Debtor's respective Title III case number and the last four (4) digits of each Debtor's federal tax identification number, as applicable, are the (i) Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (the "Commonwealth") (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3283-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3481); (ii) Puerto Rico Sales Tax Financing Corporation ("COFINA") (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3284-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 8474); (iii) Puerto Rico Highways and Transportation Authority ("HTA") (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3567-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3808); (iv) Employees Retirement System of the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico ("ERS") (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 3566-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 9686); (v) Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority ("PREPA") (Bankruptcy Case No. 17 BK 4780-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3747); and (vi) Puerto Rico Public Buildings Authority ("PBA", and together with the Commonwealth, COFINA, HTA, ERS, and PREPA, the "Debtors") (Bankruptcy Case No. 19-BK-5523-LTS) (Last Four Digits of Federal Tax ID: 3801) (Title III case numbers are listed as Bankruptcy Case numbers due to software limitations).

² Capitalized terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings given to such terms in the Objection.

PROMESA; and due and proper notice of the Objection having been provided to those parties identified therein, and no other or further notice being required; and the Court having determined that the Claim asserts liabilities for which the Commonwealth is not liable; and the Court having determined that the relief sought in the Objection is in the best interest of the Commonwealth, its creditors, and all the parties in interest; and the Court having determined that the legal and factual bases set forth in the Objection establish just cause for the relief granted herein; and after due deliberation and sufficient cause appearing therefor, it is hereby

ORDERED that the Objection is GRANTED as set forth herein; and it is further

ORDERED that the Claim is hereby disallowed in its entirety; and it is further

ORDERED that Prime Clerk, LLC, is authorized and directed to designate the Claim as expunged on the official claims register in Title III Cases; and it is further

ORDERED that this Court shall retain jurisdiction to hear and determine all matters arising from or related to the implementation, interpretation, or enforcement of this Order.

Dated: _____

Honorable Judge Laura Taylor Swain
United States District Judge